



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Janie Miller
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To: Kentucky Vaccine Program (KVP) Providers

From: Laura Harrod, MS Ed.

Kentucky Vaccine Program Coordinator

Date: May 5, 2011

Subject: Dormitory-Style Vaccine Storage Units

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has mandated that a dormitory-style refrigerator (a small combination refrigerator-freezer unit outfitted with a single external door) is never acceptable for permanent storage of VFC vaccines. This type of refrigerator places vaccine at a high risk of freezing. While these dormitory-style units may perform well periodically, these types of units are not reliable to maintain the temperatures needed to keep the vaccine safely within the required ranges.

For several years now the Kentucky VFC Program has not allowed newly enrolled providers to use dormitory-style refrigerators as permanent storage unit for VFC vaccine. Now, current providers must phase out these units within 3 months of the date of this memorandum or by July 31, 2011. Consequently, by July 31, 2011, there will be no Kentucky VFC providers using dormitory-style refrigerators. All providers currently using dormitory-style refrigerators must purchase an appropriate vaccine storage unit to replace dormitory-style refrigerators. An invoice indicating this purchase must be submitted to the Kentucky Immunization Program no later than July 31, 2011. Failure to do so will result in suspension from the VFC program until such time as an appropriate storage unit is purchased and is in use. The Immunization Field Staff person for each provider who currently has a dormitory-style refrigerator will be checking with each of these providers after July 31, 2011, to ensure that appropriate vaccine storage units are in use. Providers found to still be using dormitory-style refrigerators after July 31, 2011, will be immediately suspended from the VFC program and will be unable to reorder vaccine until an invoice showing proof of purchase of an appropriate vaccine storage unit has been faxed to the Kentucky Immunization Program.

KVP providers must have appropriate equipment that can store vaccine and maintain proper conditions. A dormitory-style refrigerator is defined as a small combination refrigerator/freezer unit that is outfitted with one external door and is not appropriate for 24 hour/7 days storage. Two types of storage units are acceptable for permanent vaccine storage: 1) A refrigerator that has a separate freezer compartment with a separate exterior door. (It is best if there are 2 temperature gauges also, one for the freezer and one for the refrigerator section.) 2) Stand-alone, single-purpose refrigerators and freezers. All units must have a working thermometer calibrated with certificate in accordance with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards placed in a central area inside each storage compartment. Thermometers are available through the Kentucky Immunization Program.

Anytime a new storage unit of any type is purchased you must plug in the unit, get it to the appropriate temperature and then log for 48 hours before placing the vaccines into the unit. Please mark this on the temperature log for that refrigeration unit so we will be able to tell the date the new unit was purchased and stabilized before putting in the vaccine.

Permanent storage is defined as having the vaccine supply maintained in the unit 24 hours a day/7 days a week. While dormitory-style refrigerators are not adequate for long-term storage; they can be used to temporarily store a clinic's single-day supply of refrigerated vaccines. All VFC vaccines must be moved back to permanent storage units for overnight storage. The freezer portion of the dormitory-style refrigerator must never be used to store any vaccines. For both permanent and temporary storage of VFC vaccine, it is required that temperatures be monitored twice daily and recorded in a log.

Therefore, providers have two options for vaccine storage:

1. Permanently storing vaccine in a refrigerator with a separate exterior door each for the refrigerator and freezer sections or a stand alone refrigerator or freezer; OR
2. Permanent storage as noted above with the option to move one day's worth of vaccine to a dorm style refrigerator for use in the clinic during that day and returning unused doses to the permanent storage unit at the end of each day. If this option is utilized, providers must check temperatures in this temporary storage unit twice daily in addition to checking temperatures twice daily in the permanent storage unit.

The Kentucky VFC Program is taking this action due to the rising cost of vaccines. Nationally VFC vaccine cost is over \$3 billion and in 2010 Kentucky shipped more than \$45 million in vaccine for the state. It is essential for the integrity and continuation of the VFC Program and Kentucky Vaccine Program to ensure that vaccine is stored in appropriate units. This will decrease the chance of vaccine loss due to inappropriate storage conditions.

If you have questions regarding ordering, please contact the Kentucky Immunization Program at 502-564-4478:

- Judy Baker is at extension 3518 (Judy.Baker@ky.gov)
- Laura Harrod is at extension 3855 (Laura.Harrod@ky.gov).

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